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THE HOPE OF THE NEGRO.

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Oct 1902

WHAT are the possibilities of the negro? What is the duty of the white man toward him?

These questions can best be answered by a careful study of the negro's past and present. We turn to the family tree of humanity and find that the negro is on the lowest lateral branch which is supposed to indicate, on the theory of evolution, the greatest simplicity of organisation. On examination we find that there are in the negro, not only fewer convolutions of the brain but other characteristics which show that he is less highly organised than some other races.

In no period of time and in no country has he built up a civilisation. He has domesticated no animal, has made no important discoveries or developments, and has made no use of iron or stone in the construction of walls, aqueducts, or temples. In the ten thousand years or more that he has been on the earth no one of the race has reached the heights of statesmanship, barring the possible exception of Toussaint L'Ouverture whose friends claim that he was a pure-blooded negro.

It is not necessary, however, to reach the conclusion that the negro has not a future of indefinite improvement; but these are the plain facts of history which we cannot ignore, nor explain away, and which must be taken into account in the study of the subject before us. It makes a difference whether or not a race in all the years of its past has accomplished these things.

There is another preliminary subject which we must briefly consider; namely, race prejudice, or race antipathy. Race prejudice is not something of recent growth, but is one of the most notable features of ancient history. It is not a peculiarity of Anglo-Saxons, nor is the negro the only race against whom it is directed. The Jews, the Chinese, and other races have felt its poisonous

erpine, a vegetation-goddess. Local modes of worship made prominent here one, there another, trait, and the differences of local names served to obscure the original identity of different versions of the same dogma.

Zoroastrian rigor antagonised the old forms of paganism, yet even under Persian rule the old trinitarian belief came to the front. The trinity Ahura Mazda, Anahita, Mithra is in its origin decidedly un-Zoroastrian and may be regarded as an adaptation of the Persian monotheism to the prevalent trinitarianism of their conquered nations.

The same notions prevailed in Egypt where the trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Hor is probably the echo of still older views of the same kind.

In the Book of Wisdom, Sophia or Wisdom (originally a synonym for *Logos*) is spoken of as the spouse of God, being privy to his counsels; and the Messiah is her son.

We know from the Koran that the Christian trinity conception known to Mohammed was the trinity of the family, God, Mary, and Christ, and a quotation from the lost Gospel of the Hebrews speaks of the Holy Ghost as the mother of Christ.

The trinity conception of God-father, God-mother, and God-son was apparently rejected by the Western Church for the sake of the sanctification of family life implied thereby. Primitive Christianity was strongly biased by asceticism and monachism, and woman was regarded as temptation incarnate. Nothing could be more pagan to an African or Roman monk than the belief in a God-mother, and thus the Holy Ghost lost its sexual character and developed into a neuter whose definite relation to God the Father and God the Son was rendered indistinct and finally formulated as an influence proceeding from both of them. The less offensive names God-father and God-son, with the omission of God the Mother, i. e., her replacement through the uncompromising Holy Ghost, have been retained to the present day.

Mary, the mother of God, so called by both the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, practically still plays the part of the God-mother, the θεὰ ἅγια, the holy goddess of the ancient nations; and this persistency of the trinity idea is not surprising at all, first because of conservatism in matters religious, but then also on account of the natural foundation which it finds in the facts of life.

shafts or unwelcome blows. Race antipathy has grown out of dissimilarities in color, religion, mode of life, and intelligence. Multiply the number of points in which people differ and you intensify the antipathy; reduce the points and you increase the possibilities of sympathy and social contact. We dislike the Chinaman largely because he wears a cue, dresses differently from us, eats differently, is of a different color, and is different in his religious beliefs. The same things in greater or less degree underlie all race prejudice.

Whether there is a good and indispensable element in race prejudice or not, or how far it may be used without abuse, are subjects not necessary to discuss here. But race prejudice has existed some ten thousand years, and whatever may be the unreason in it we must take it into account in our dealing with different peoples. It has been here so long, is so wide-spread and so persistent, that it would be folly to ignore it. Attempts to do this invariably end in deepening the prejudice and in delaying the good which was intended to be accomplished.

With this much premised as a basis upon which to build let us consider the things which lie nearest to the negro in the development of his character and usefulness.

The hope of the negro lies in his own self-respect, and in his efforts to maintain it. If a people be content to live thriftlessly—in dirt and rags—it will create no surprise if the world withhold that mead of respect which would otherwise be due. The negro must have, of course, the moral and financial support of his more prosperous neighbor, the white man, but it must be drilled into him from every quarter that his salvation depends upon himself. He must begin at the lowest round of the ladder, as all races have done, and not look upon it as menial. There is nothing in the negro's past to warrant the belief that he can advance speedily to the ranks of scholarship and statesmanship. Forced efforts in these respects end in humiliating defeat, and leave the whole situation worse. He must first be master of small things before he can master large things. He must improve his material surroundings before he can hope to make great progress in things intellectual.

The things he needs to teach himself at the present time more than all else are cleanliness of person, cleanliness of surroundings, a clean moral life, how to raise good crops, how to take care of a horse or a cow, how to husband his resources, and at the same time carry with him the conviction that he is not degrading his manhood in doing these simple things. President Booker T. Wash-

ington is doing the negro race an inestimable benefit by his intelligent insistence that these things come first.

Whether the negro should look no higher than a good practical knowledge of industrial affairs and a good English education is a question entirely premature. Let these things come first and come surely, and then other so-called higher things will follow naturally, if they follow at all. Until the negro has made substantial progress in the things indicated above, his motto should be: "This one thing I do."

The negro must be made to see—the whole world for that matter—that no good thing is menial as the word is commonly used—that there is nothing low except in a moral sense. The day-laborers in the common walks of life, the men who make clean, healthy, and beautiful our cities, are as necessary and as worthy, as far as their vocation is concerned, as the men who make our laws, or the minister who proclaims the Gospel. Sensible people must cease making invidious distinctions between men of different occupations and different wages, when those occupations are absolutely essential to human health, happiness, and well-being. The man who lives an upright life, and adds something to the food supply, the health, or happiness of the world is a nobleman, and should be made to feel it. The negro is filling a worthy place now. The vast majority of the race can never rise higher than day-laborers; but in this respect millions of their white brothers are no better off.

Much of the restlessness and unhappy discontent in the world is due to the flattering, vague exhortation "come up higher," when it is very evident that the only possibility of coming up higher with a vast number of people is the attainment of more thoroughness, more skill, more self-respect, and more rational contentment in those things which some inconsiderate people call menial.

Politics has many snares even for those races which have longest been accustomed to political affairs; and the novice is confronted with extraordinary temptations to play the part of the "cat's paw" for unscrupulous politicians. The negro's elective franchise, so far, has been of little help to him, if not a positive disadvantage. He should not be deprived of his right to vote, but he must show to the world that he appreciates the responsibility of suffrage by taking an honorable, unbiased interest in the affairs of government.

Mistaken philanthropy has contributed its share toward obstructing the progress of the negro. This was perhaps quite natural. The help which has come to the negro since his emancipa-

tion was intended to offset as far as possible the years when his labor counted nothing for his material prosperity. But the philanthropist must see to it, as far as it is in his power, that his help does not end in pauperism—a dreadful evil. When the leading seminaries in this country are exercising more than usual care in the distribution of their benefactions to white students surely it is not out of place to exercise equal care in our help of the negro. The best help we can give any one is to enable him to help himself.

The negro must be taught to seek his well-being among the white people with whom he lives. He should vote with them and for their best interests, for the interests of both are identical. He will never be numerous in the North. The climate and the products of the soil are against him. Long summers, and cotton, corn, rice, potatoes, and tobacco are the things upon which he thrives. His greatest opportunities are in the South. There thousands of negroes own farms, stores, and are otherwise prosperous. Nor are his educational needs neglected. I quote from the *Boston Transcript's* special correspondent at Tuskegee, Alabama, February 21, 1902 at a conference of educators: "He (Mr. George Foster Peabody) thought that the people of the North were coming to see how great a mistake had been made in not understanding the attitude of the white people of the South in the matter of education, and their earnestness for the education of all the people of the South, of both races.

"It was an interesting commentary on what Mr. Peabody had said that later in the meeting Pres. W. H. Lanier, of Alcorn College, Mississippi, reported that whereas the State appropriation for his school had been $27,000 a year for the last two years, it had just been raised to $50,000 a year for the next two years. This amount is so very generous that it attracted special attention, and I am told that Mississippi among Southern States has always been notably liberal for its support of its negro institutions."

The South needs the co-operation and sympathy of the North; for the negro question is a national one. The South should not object to criticism if that criticism is discriminate and friendly. In years past there has been too much of a disposition in both sections of the country to make war on each other over the negro's shoulders, and the result has been hurtful to all concerned. A better day has dawned. The best people are seeing things together, and Pres. Booker T. Washington has had a large share in bringing about this condition of things, for in a straightforward,

manly way he is giving the former slave-owners and their sons credit for sympathy and help in his work at Tuskegee.

The friend of the negro must see to it that he does not come into sharp competition with the white man for his bread. This is not a sectional question. It is as true in Illinois and Indiana as it is in any Southern State. There is no necessity for hurtful competition. There is plenty of room and work for all. Dotted here and there all over the South are farms of eighty, a hundred, acres or more upon which negroes are living happily, and they are not in the white man's way. This class of negroes are good citizens. They are the ones upon whose sons the white farmer can depend for his hired man, and upon whose daughters the white farmer's wife can depend for nice clean laundry.

In the towns, too, quite a number of negroes have groceries and dry-goods stores. Some are doctors, and some school-teachers, and they are not in the way of the white man.

A mistake is made by some unthinking people in looking upon negroids as the advance guard of the negro race. Negroids are a class to themselves, and in no true sense representatives of the negro race. Upon the theory that negroids are representatives of the negro race too much is expected of negroes, their possibilities are overrated. In this country it is only the negroids who have been intrusted with responsible positions in education and government affairs.

The statement has recently been made that "no two races have ever lived in the same country on terms of equality and mutual respect unless they were capable of intermarriage." In reply it was said that "the races must remain on terms of inequality or, by the intervention of a higher law, equality and mutual respect will come without the necessity of intermarriage." The crux in these statements is the word "equality." What does it mean? It is used in a very loose sense—sometimes rhetorical, often sentimental. The statement must be re-written with the word "equality" left out, for it is very plain that no matter how much respect and consideration one race may have for another yet if that race refuses close social intercourse and intermarriage with the other race equality is logically and necessarily excluded.

There will never be much social and marital contact between the two races. That has been settled ten thousand years or more. The North is no more in favor of a closer social union than the South, and I am glad to say the negroes do not want it. What is

needed is that the white man treat the negro with patience, kindness, and justice.

The progress of the negro lies in the gradual improvement of human nature. Everything cannot be done in one generation or several. The people among whom he lives will improve and he will improve with them. Neither mob law nor sentimental philanthropy has come to stay. They will both give way before intelligence and wisdom. The greatest lesson of all the ages is that from time immemorial there has been well-nigh unbroken progress in human nature and in human institutions. But this progress has been very gradual. It is the unwise philanthropist who would force human nature and human institutions as one would force a hothouse plant. It is the philosopher who knows that the great laws of evolution are true, that the permanently good is slow in coming, and he is therefore willing "to labor and to wait."

ALPHA AND OMEGA.

BY THE EDITOR.

IN the catacombs the Chrisma[1] is commonly combined with the letters A and ω, the latter for unknown reasons always written in cursive script, not Ω but ω, while the former is a capital. The A and ω are intended to symbolise him who says, "I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last" (Rev. i. 11).

The idea of comparing God to letters of the alphabet is foreign to the Greek mind and reminds one of the arguments of Brahman sages who philosophise on the letters of the syllable *Aum*, the first letter of the alphabet in whose praise hymns were sung, as containing seed-like all the revelations of the Vedas.

The sanctity in which the Egyptians held the sound Iao, as being the god with the Adorable Name (i. e., Abraxas) may have impressed the early Christians. Observe that the name IAΩ is also (like the Christian symbol Aω) spelt with a cursive ω, not with the capital Ω. We can easily understand that the I, being a mere dash, was dropped.

There are a great number of Abraxas gems bearing the name of IAΩ in a script which closely resembles the Christian symbols Aω. Since the Iao-worship is older than Christianity we may assume that Christians being reminded thereby of the passage in St. John's Revelation, adopted the use of the letters.[2]

It seems probable that the Aω is a symbol that is older than Christianity and had a pagan significance before it was interpreted as an illustration of Revelation i. 2, but nothing definite is known and we can only make suggestions.

[1] In the catacombs the earliest well-dated inscription with the Chrisma is of the year 71 A.D., the last ones belong to the sixth century.

[2] Another hypothesis which, though less probable, is by no means impossible, may find a place in a footnote. The soul (called in Egyptian KA) is spelled in Koptic script Kω which bears close resemblance to the Greek Aω. But a derivation of the symbol Aω from Iao seems more probable than from KA.